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MASSACHUSETTS COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT

**MANAGING THE COAST
FOR THE FUTURE**



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2. 1990

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Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Environmental Affairs



894/36



MCZM

The Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management Office (MCZM) brings together a small staff of specialists in biology, geology, law, environmental policy and waterfront development planning.

While MCZM is not a state regulatory agency, it does review federal activities in Massachusetts to ensure that they are consistent with state coastal policy. MCZM works with state agencies to improve the regulatory machinery set-up to protect the resources of the coast and to set coastal management priorities. The Coastal Resources Advisory Board (CRAB) and Citizen Advisory Committees add an essential citizen perspective to this process.

Sound policy depends upon a solid information base. MCZM strives to complete the coastal picture through scientific studies, inventories and mapping projects that include both natural features and waterfront facilities.

In 1983, the successful role of the MCZM program in setting a coastal agenda was given an important vote of confidence with the passage of state legislation that established a permanent Office of Coastal Zone Management within the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs. With a goal of ensuring the protection of natural resources while promoting wise development in the coastal zone, MCZM directs its efforts in the following areas:





COASTAL MASSACHUSETTS

A magnificent 1,500 miles of tidal shoreline including sandy beaches, rocky coast, bustling urban ports, small town harbors, almost 50,000 acres of thriving salt marsh and a productive fishery are all part of the Massachusetts coast.

As officially defined, the Coastal Zone extends landward from the state's shoreline to 100 feet beyond specified major roads, rail lines or other visible rights-of-way and seaward to the edge of the territorial sea. All of Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket are included.

The coast has been a home, a business, a playground and a way of life in Massachusetts for over 350 years. Today, many interests compete for the use of this fragile resource.

A FEDERAL-STATE PARTNERSHIP

In 1972, the United States Congress actively acknowledged the critical importance of the country's coastal resources—and the pressures threatening them—by passing the Coastal Zone Management Act. Of the 35 states and territories eligible to participate, 29 have taken advantage of federal financial assistance to develop and implement comprehensive coastal management plans.

The Commonwealth's program was developed through the coordinated efforts of the legislature, local, state and regional officials and hundreds of interested citizens. In 1978, the Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management Program became the first on the eastern seaboard to be granted federal approval.



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

In Massachusetts, much of the responsibility for land use management lies in the hands of municipal officials such as planning board members and conservation commissioners. MCZM staff scientists and planners work with local decision makers concerning waterfront development proposals, tidelands protection, water quality management and public access to beaches.

MCZM also brings technical expertise to bear on state, regional and federal efforts to identify and resolve specific coastal management issues. For example, the MCZM-funded 1982 Marine Fisheries Policy Report was a first step in comprehensively addressing fisheries management concerns for the Commonwealth.

FEDERAL CONSISTENCY

An important provision of approved Coastal Management Programs provides that federal actions affecting the coastal zone must be carried out in accordance with state management objectives. Any large coastal project requiring a federal license, implemented by a federal agency or carried out with federal funds must be reviewed by MCZM for consistency with Massachusetts coastal policy. For example, MCZM plays the critical administrative role in the state's review of oil and gas exploratory activity on the Outer Continental Shelf, including Georges Bank.



NATURAL AREAS PROTECTION

Over the years, indiscriminate development has destroyed or seriously damaged important coastal resource areas. MCZM devotes a major effort to ensuring the future protection of sensitive natural systems.

Regionally significant wetland or other coastal areas, including undeveloped estuaries and salt marshes, have been designated Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs). More stringent regulatory standards and a more thorough review process have been developed to govern certain activities affecting these productive marine systems.

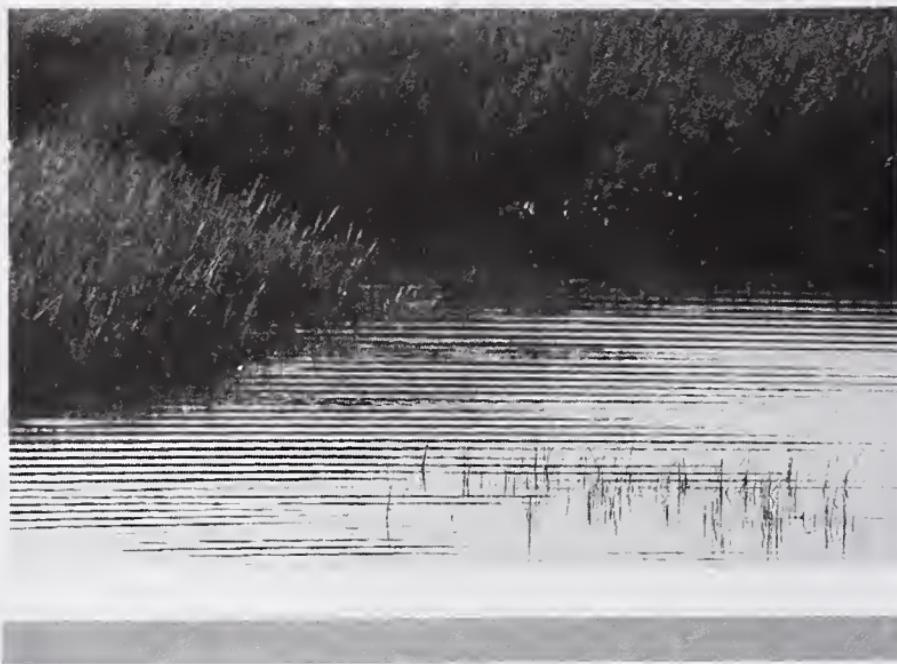
In addition, MCZM provides staff and financial support to help place conservation restrictions on a variety of coastal wetland areas. Landforms such as barrier beaches are given particular attention for the role they play in buffering coastal areas from flooding, erosion and other storm hazards. MCZM also coordinates the National Marine Sanctuary Program and assists in the administration of the National Estuarine Research Reserve Program in Massachusetts.



WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT

MCZM policy encourages renovation and expansion of waterfront facilities in developed port and harbor areas. Funds are available to coastal communities through the Coastal Facilities Improvement Program for pier construction, marine park development and improvements to commercial and recreational fishing facilities.

MCZM is also actively involved in implementing recent amendments to the law that governs the licensing of state tidelands (ch. 91). The lands between the high and low tidelines are subject to certain public rights, while subtidal lands are publicly owned. The new regulations better protect the public interest in these areas and encourage water dependent uses of tideland resources.



EDUCATION AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

There's a lot to learn about coastal Massachusetts. Many of MCZM's projects have generated brochures, guidebooks, maps and educational materials. From time to time, the Office sponsors conferences and workshops on a variety of coastal topics. Interested organizations and individuals are encouraged to take advantage of these valuable resources, many of which are free of charge.

For more information concerning any MCZM program or to add your name to our mailing list, please contact:

Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management
100 Cambridge Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02202
or call (617) 727-9530

MCZM PUBLICATIONS

(partial listing)

"Areas of Critical Environmental Concern."

Pamphlet describing the ACEC program. Written in question-and-answer format; nontechnical.

"Areas of Critical Environmental Concern: Site Summaries and Regulations."

Fairly technical detailing of the program including descriptions of presently designated sites.

"Barrier Beaches: A Few Questions Answered."

A clear, non-technical explanation of the structure and function of barrier beaches. Includes a summary of the regulatory framework for managing these valuable landforms in Massachusetts.

"The Coastalwealth of Massachusetts: Celebrating a Decade of Coastal Zone Management, 1978-1988."

A report summarizing highlights from the first ten years of the CZM program.

"Dredging Handbook: A Primer for Dredging in the Coastal Zone of Massachusetts."

Technical document summarizing rules, regulations and funding agencies, technologies and environmental impacts of dredging.

"The Way to the Sea: Methods for Massachusetts Communities to Provide Public Access to the Coast."

Handbook describing legal and regulatory solutions; ownership and acquisition techniques.

REGIONAL OFFICES

MCZM maintains five regional offices. Please contact the one in your area for information on local issues.

MCZM North Shore

159 Main Street
Gloucester, MA 01930
(508) 283-0598

MCZM Cape Cod

First District Court House
Barnstable, MA 02630
(508) 362-2511

MCZM South Shore

Town Hall
345 Main Street
Norwell, MA 02061
(617) 659-4909

MCZM Martha's Vineyard

Martha's Vineyard Commission
P.O. Box 1447
Olde Stone Building
New York Avenue
Oak Bluffs, MA 02557
(508) 693-3453

MCZM Southeast

P.O. Box 1012
Marion, MA 02738
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